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THE SCARLET HAND; The Orphan Heiress of Fifth Avenue. A STORY OF NEW YORK HEARTHS AND NEW YORK HOMES.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,

Author of "The Ace

CHAPTER I.

BROADWAY AT NINE O' THE NIGHT.

A CLEAR, calm evening in the month of March, in the year of our Lord, 1870.

In a doorway on Broadway, near the corner of Leonard street, sat a man. The bells had just rung out nine on the night-air, and the great highway, below Canal street, was almost deserted.

The man, who sat shivering—for the night-air was chill and cut him to the bone—in the doorway, was thinly and shabbily clad in a rusty black suit, worn threadbare, the white scarf, carefully stained black with ink, as if the wearer desired to conceal his poverty and appear as much like a gentle man as possible. A crushed and battered felt hat was adjusted carefully upon his head, in what he evidently conceived to be a rakish and jaunty fashion. A pair of wretched boots, that hardly kept his feet from the cold pavements, completed his dress.

The frock coat, buttoned tightly to the throat, told of the absence of clean linen; while his pale, thin face showed want and misery as plainly as his shabby dress.

One would have judged the man to have been thirty-five or forty years old.

That pallid face would have excited attention even in a crowd. Singularly white in hue, it yet gleamed with a rare intelligence, and was framed, as it were, by jet-black curls, hanging down in little straggling ringlets. A thin mustache and imperial adorned the upper lip and chin. A pair of great gray eyes, that looked black a dozen paces off—eyes that now shone like balls of fire so wildly did they gleam—were windows to a soul of rare inspiration, whose owner looked like a gentleman despite the seedy dress and rough, unshaven face; but the lines about the handsome mouth—the weak, wavering lines—spoke plainly of an irredeemable will.

The man was a wreck—a temporary wreck both physically and mentally. The heaven-gifted genius that should have led him on to fame had proved his ruin.

The name by which the world knew him was Edmund Mordaunt. By profession an actor, he had achieved the laurel wreath and had been deemed worthy to wear the mantle of Kemble or Kean. But prosperity and friends were too much for him. He yielded to the siren of Drink; the Spirit of Wind had touched his veins with its fatal fire. Step by step he went down the social ladder, until at last he found himself an outcast and beggar! Vainly had scheming caterers for the public—anxious to secure the dollars that his genius was sure to attract—tried to keep him from the cup that had proved his ruin. All efforts resulted in failure, and one by one friends deserted the inebriate and left him to wallow in the mire where their hands had helped to place him.

So that on that chill March night Edmund Mordaunt found himself sitting on Broadway, shivering in the cold, and without a single penny in the world wherewith to appease hunger and thirst. Food had not

passed his lips for four and twenty hours. Vainly had sought his former applauding friends, who, when his handsome, manly figure graced the boards of the theater, and the wondrous poetry of Avon's Bard came in liquid music from his lips, were wild in their enthusiasm, but turned in disgust from the thin-faced and sunken-eyed beggar who prayed for food. It is the way of the world.

"Poor Tom's a cold" muttered the shivering man, folding his arms tightly around his body as though to impart warmth by the action. "I wonder where I'm going to sleep to-night?" To die—to sleep; perchance to dream," and a deep sigh came from the thin-faced and sunken-eyed beggar who prayed for food. It is the way of the world.

"Will anybody give me ten cents to save my life?" he cried, suddenly, extending his arms as if addressing an audience. "Oh, my head feels queer," he muttered, with a half-groan, letting his head fall upon his bosom. Then he passed his hand, nervously, across his brow. "Ah! I wonder if I'm going to have the terrors again? I don't see any snakes, but I feel sick—sick. Ay, sick of life!"

"Life!" cried the wreck, with a bitter, cynical cough, that rang out shrilly on the night-air. "It isn't life—it's living death to him who has the demon of drink ever at his side. Drink—drink—give me drink!" he cried, in tones full of the pathos of despair. "Oh, God, deliver me from this curse!" he wailed, his thin white hands held pleading up to heaven. "To-night I condescended to beg from a stranger, and was spurned as a 'drunken brute.' He was a nice, black, curly-haired chap, though dressed like a coal-heaver. I'll never forget his face as long as I live. A handsome fellow, but a devil. I'll swear it by his eyes—those windows to the soul. Oh! I'd give any thing for food and a drink."

"I'm burning up inside; this thirst is killing me. I could swallow liquid fire. Oh! my head!"

The footsteps of a man coming down Broadway fell upon the ears of the miserable creature. "Here comes somebody," he muttered; "shall I try once more? It's only a rascal, and I've failed so low that my pride ought to be all gone now. Yes, I'll try. I must have liquor or I shall go mad."

Mordaunt rose to his feet, but staggered from weakness, and but for the friendly support of the wall would have fallen.

"I'm about done for. I shall pass in my checks soon," he muttered, with a ghastly attempt at a smile. "It's a young man," he continued, as the stranger came in sight; "perhaps there'll be some spark of pity in his heart. 'One touch of nature makes all the world akin.'"

Then the wreck advanced and met the stranger.

"I beg your pardon, sir, for accosting you in this manner," said the outcast, touching his hat with graceful politeness; "but I am in want—in great want. Can you oblige me with a loan? If it's only ten cents, sir, I shall be grateful."

The stranger paused. The rays of the gas-

light fell full upon the features of Mordaunt, while the other's were in the shade.

For a moment the new-comer gazed into the face of the beggar. The pale, wan features proved that the wretched man had spoken truly.

"You are really suffering?" asked the stranger.

Mordaunt could not repress a start. The voice was strangely familiar to him. Where had he heard it before?

"Yes, sir," the actor said. "I am indeed in want or I should not ask you, a stranger for assistance. I believe you are a stranger to me, sir, although your voice sounds familiar to me."

"I am sure that I have never met you before, for I seldom forget a face," rejoined the other.

"Strange," said Mordaunt, with a puzzled shake of the head. "I can almost swear that I've heard your voice before. My ear used to be excellent before liquor used me up." The simple words told the history of a wasted life.

"I can see by your manner, sir, that you are a gentleman," said the young man, in his clear, frank voice. "I feel an inclination to aid you, although you are a stranger to me. Here's a five-dollar bill," and the young man took the "greenback" from his pocket-book, together with a card. "And this is my card. If you will call at my residence, No. 268 Fifth avenue, to-morrow, I'll see what I can do for you further."

Then the stranger gave the bill and card into the trembling hands of the wreck; and as he did so, stepped forward, so that the gaship shone upon his face.

Mordaunt gazed with wonder upon the countenance of the donor, while mechanically his hand grasped the bill and the card. There was nothing in the face to excite wonder. It was that of a young man of three and twenty—a handsome face; the hair dark brown, curling tightly to the head; the eyes dark-blue, almost black. The features were regular; the skin of an olive tint.

Yet Mordaunt gazed at the young man as though a specter stood before him.

"Heavens!" he cried, in astonishment not unmixed with dismay.

"What's the matter?" asked the young man.

"Did you pass here about an hour ago, dressed roughly in a pea-jacket and with a black slouch hat?"

"No," said the stranger, astonished at the question.

"Am I going mad?" cried the actor, in bewilderment. "Sir, as I stood here, an hour ago, I begged assistance from a man that passed, and who spoke to me harshly and went on. That man had your face—your hair—your eyes—your very voice; he was your living image. Have you a twin brother?"

"No; I am an only son," replied the stranger.

Mordaunt passed his hand across his forehead as if to recall his scattered thoughts.

"I am in a maze," he said, at length;

"this man had your very movements, even. Can I have dreamed all this? Are my brains all burnt up by liquor?"

"It is possibly your fancy," said the young man. "What is your name?"

"Edward Mordaunt," said the actor.

"I shall remember. By the way, isn't this Leonard street here?" and the stranger pointed to the corner.

"Yes."

"How many streets down to Baxter?"

"Baxter is the third street."

"Good-night."

The young man turned into Leonard street and disappeared.

The actor stood as one in a maze.

"What can a gentleman like that want in Baxter street—the worst hole in all New York—at this hour of the night? Ah!" And Mordaunt started as a thought flashed into his mind. "The other—he walking image—turned down Leonard street; that is, if I am not mad or have not dreamed it. Can these two men have any thing in common—the one who has treated me like a dog? Something tells me to follow this man—that he is in danger. He is a stranger to this locality, that is certain. No stranger is safe, alone, in the shadows of Baxter. Can it be that he is being lured into danger? Either I am mad or else my mind is strong! Something tells me to follow this man—that he is in danger. He is a stranger to this locality, that is certain. No stranger is safe, alone, in the shadows of Baxter. Can it be that he is being lured into danger? Either I am mad or else my mind is strong! Something tells me to follow this man—that he is in danger. He is a stranger to this locality, that is certain. 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"I read the account in an old file of the *Herald*. It stated that the assault was caused by some personal quarrel between you and this Clinton Strathroy."

"I'll tell you all about it," said Duke, after a moment's thought. "In 1846 I was quite a young fellow. I was a butcher-boy by trade, and I didn't do much work, 'cos I liked to loaf around the engine-houses better, or to go off on a *tear* with the boys. I had a sister just eighteen years old, an' she was just as pretty a gal as a man would want to look at. She tended in a fancy goods store in the Bowery. In some way this Clinton Strathroy got acquainted with her. He pretended to love her, and she—poor, foolish child—thought that this wealthy Fifth-avenue 'blood' meant honest by her. Just at this time I had to leave New York, 'cos in a little rumpus at a fire in the Bowery, I pretty near killed a policeman, an' I had to get out of the way until the affair blew over. When I came back to New York, Lizzie—that was my sister's name—had disappeared. I hunted for her high and low, for Lize was the only one in this world that I cared two cents for. But I couldn't find her. I found out, of course, that this Clinton Strathroy had been making love to her. I had a suspicion that he knew where she was, so I went to his house on Fifth avenue, but he was not at home. Then I felt sure that he had something to do with Lizzie's going away. I kept a close watch upon this man's house. For a whole year he was away from New York; then he returned, bringing a wife with him—a Southern gal—that he had just married. Then for the first time I began to think that perhaps I had wronged him in regard to my sister. But, about six months after that time, I was down on the docks one day, when a Charlestion steamer landed, and from the steamer, carrying a baby in her arms, came Lizzie. It was the old story. This Clinton Strathroy had persuaded her to run away with him. They had been married by some minister here in New York. She had forgotten the name and the place where she had been married, and Strathroy had kept the marriage-certificate—that is, if there ever was such a thing, 'cos I thought all the while that she had been gulled by a mock-marriage. After the marriage he had taken her down South. There the child was born, a boy. After the birth of the child, Strathroy began to treat her coldly, and at last, one day, he told her that it was all over between them—that she was not lawfully his wife—and then he deserted her. She managed, at last, to beg her way to New York. After she told me how she had been treated by this man, I went for him—met him on Broadway, and stabbed him on sight. For that I was arrested and sent to Sing Sing. Strathroy recovered. I had put my sister in comfortable lodgings in Hester street, but while I was in prison she died—died of a broken heart. I sent for her baby and made arrangements to have it looked after in Sing Sing village—boarded with a woman there. It was a pretty little blue-eyed baby."

"After being in Sing Sing a year, I was pardoned out. I came to New York to close up the old account, for I had sworn in open court that I'd kill Clinton Strathroy, and I meant to do it. But he, hearing that I had been pardoned, and I s'pose feeling pretty sure that I would be as good as my word, left the city and has never been heard of since."

"And what became of the child?" Kidd asked.

"I don't know. After I came to the city to settle with Clinton Strathroy, and found that he'd run away, I went back to Sing Sing to get the baby, and there I found neither woman nor child. Both had gone. The woman had stolen the baby and left it.

"A strange circumstance."

"Yes, and from that day to this I never have heard a single word 'bout either," said the Slasher. "But, I'll tell you the queerest thing about the whole affair. My sister's baby was baptized in Charleston, South Carolina, by the name of Allynne Strathroy—Allynne was his father's name—and Strathroy's son by his wife here was also called Allynne Strathroy. So, you see, there's two Allynnes in the world, somewhere, and I've often thought that it would be funny if these two Allynnes should meet, and the first Allynne avenge upon the second the wrong that has been done his mother; and, mind you, neither of the two knowing that they are half-brothers."

"About as likely to happen as for two Sundays to come together," said Kidd.

"Exactly; but as queer things as that do happen sometimes."

"By the way, John, I expect a caller, and if you've settled all about the election affair?" Kidd said.

"Yes, all right. Good-night," and the Slasher left the room, leaving Kidd to his own fearful thoughts.

CHAPTER III.
STEALING A LIFE.

MORDAUNT, keenly alive and interested in the case before him, and which his imagination had invested with momentous interest, followed close on the heels of Allynne Strathroy, almost forgetful of the dreadful thirst that had driven him to become a beggar that night.

Strathroy turned into Baxter street and paused for a moment, as if uncertain how to proceed. Then, after examining the

number of the house before which he stood, he turned to the left. A few steps on he paused before the door of a small wooden house, and after feeling in vain for a bell-knob, he rapped loudly on the door.

A few seconds the door was opened and Allyne entered the house. The door closing after, hid him from the eyes of the actor, who, on the other side of the street, concealed in the shadow of a doorway, was watching him with eager eyes.

"Well, that's a nice-looking sort of a crib for a gentlemanly-looking young fellow like this one to visit. What on earth can bring him to this sweet-smelling locality?" mused Mordaunt, as he surveyed the building into which the young man had gone.

"It's all dark; no light or sign of life here," he continued. "Since I've come so far, 'pricked to' by foolish honesty and love, I'll stay here until he comes out—that is, if he does come out. And if this is any sort of a trap into which he has fallen, he can't be put out of the way without some little noise, which I'll be apt to hear. I don't often take fancies for men; I've learned too much of the world for that; but this man is a man by whom I can swear, and I'll stand by him as by my own life. I'll watch!"

So Mordaunt seated himself in a doorway and remained with his eyes intently fixed upon the mysterious-looking building opposite.

After the Slasher had departed, James Kidd paced rapidly up and down the little room for a minute or two, apparently in deep thought. His steps were noiseless, and resembled more the stealthy tread of the tiger creeping in upon its prey than the firm step of a human being.

"Will he come?" he muttered, as he paused, and for a moment listened as seeking an answer to his question from the silence of the night. "And if he does come," he continued in his musings, "shall I?" There was a fearful meaning in the obscure question.

Then the young man set his teeth firmly together and struck the table, lightly, with his clenched hand.

"Yes, be it for good or evil. If it gives Blanche Maybury into my arms, or gives my neck to the hangman's noose, I will do it! Some invisible power is leading me on. Is it Fate, or is it the Original Sin, which the ministers say, is born in us?"

Kidd went to the bed, and, turning down the covering, drew from beneath the pillow a long, narrow dagger. It was an Italian stiletto, keen and sharp as a razor. It had been ground down until it was hardly half an inch in width, although some eight inches in length.

Thoughtfully the young man ran his finger over the edges of the knife.

"This it was which the Italian burglar used when he stabbed the policeman. A single blow, and death came instantly." The muscles of the hardened face seemed to deaden into stone as he spoke the words. Involuntarily, as it were, his fingers closed about the handle of the deadly-looking weapon.

"It must be a single blow, and that sure. No noise—no violence; and then—then an effort which will require all my mind—all my nerve. I'll risk it!" And having come to this conclusion, Kidd placed the knife carefully in an inside pocket in his coat.

"Does Mr. Williams reside here?" asked Strathroy.

"Yes," answered the man, in a somewhat hoarse voice.

Strathroy started. He felt sure that he had heard the voice before, somewhere; and the impression came upon him that the man was trying to disguise his voice.

"I received a note from this Mr. Williams requesting me to call here this evening about nine, as he had some information to give me in regard to a certain matter."

"Yes, sir; I understand. Will you walk upstairs?" And the man turned and led the way through the entry. Strathroy followed, keeping, however, a wary eye upon the movements of the person before him, and quietly drawing from his pocket a little revolver, which he carried in his hand ready for use at the slightest sign of danger. Allynne was a New Yorker, and knew full well the character of the locality in which he was. He did not intend to be led into a trap and slaughtered like a blind puppy. But, the man went straight onward, up the little, crooked stairs, and into a small room at the head of the landing. This room was plainly furnished, and by a single candle.

As Strathroy entered the circle of light, he carelessly slid his revolver into the side-pocket of his overcoat, still keeping his hand upon it, ready for instant action should occasion demand it.

"Sit down, sir," said the stranger, after they had entered the room. Again the voice sounded familiar to Allynne; it seemed almost like an echo of his own.

"Have you the letter, sir?" asked the man, after Allynne had sat down.

"Yes, here it is," said Allynne, laying it upon the table.

"You were not afraid to come here, at this hour?" questioned the stranger.

"No," replied Allyne; "I am armed, and I drew the revolver from his pocket, then slid it back again, 'you see. Besides, I haven't a single cent upon my person. My watch, rings, etc., are all at home. So that if the design was to plunder me, you would be foiled."

"I merely asked the question for information, that is all," replied the man, a strange light gleamed in the dark-blue eyes that the green glasses hid. "I am Mr. Williams. I wrote that letter, telling you that I could give you information in regard to the fate of your father, Clinton Strathroy, who so mysteriously disappeared twenty-two years ago. But, I have failed in one important point, and can not say anything to-night. If you will come here at ten to-morrow, and are willing to pay—I will take your word for the amount—you shall know the fate of your father."

Allynne looked keenly at the speaker. Despite the bandaged head, despite the green glasses, Allyne traced a resemblance in the face—a resemblance to pictures of his father, taken when that father was a young man. Strathroy was puzzled.

"To-morrow, then?" Allyne said.

"To-morrow," the man repeated.

Allynne turned to go, when, with the spring of a tiger, the stranger leaped upon him. One strong arm was wound around his neck; the flash of a keen-edged knife dazzled his eyes.

Little use was Strathroy's revolver—away in his pocket—against this unlooked-for attack. With desperate energy, Allyne strove to free himself from the iron-like grip of his unknown assailant. In the full vigor of manhood, with strength unimpaired, Strathroy, before this hour, never had met his master; but, now, vain was his effort to break the vice-like grasp of his foe.

The iron hand on his throat stifled his utterance; the steel was flashing before his eyes. With a last, desperate effort—for he felt that his strength was going fast—Allynne struggled for his life.

(To be Continued.)

The Masked Miner:

OR,

THE IRON-MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER.

A TALE OF PITTSBURGH.

BY WM. MASON TURNER,
AUTHOR OF "UNDER BAIL," "SILKEN CORD," ETC.

CHAPTER XIV.

MIDNIGHT WHISPERS.

NIGHT gloomed down over the place; the city lay quiet—sleeping beneath the heavy pall of darkness, and its own constantly overhanging clouds of soot and smoke.

It had been an eventful day in this city of iron and coal—the day just passed; and in certain circles an excitement was created, seldom witnessed.

The main incidents of this singular case of abduction may still be remembered by many worthy denizens of the Smoky Town; and, to the author's certain knowledge—for we have seen him recently—the estimable alderman before whom Tom Worth had his preliminary examination, is to-day living.

Of course such court cases, nevertheless, occur daily in all of our great cities, but they are quickly decided, and are rapidly and speedily forgotten. The ripple on the surface of society, they may create, gradually, may oftenest, rapidly, trembles away toward the shores, and is lost amid the wavelets that fret and break upon the margin of the life sea.

So it may be of the incidents in the tale we are weaving. We have chosen it from among several—have dignified it, and given it prominence and importance. Of course, attention will be drawn to it, and there may be some, or many, who will carol at its truthfulness, and doubt the authenticity of the case as we have recorded it.

To such we will simply say, consult the criminal annals of the city for that particular twelve months—only ten years since—and you will find the case. Of course, we have changed it in some particulars, to suit our purpose; but you can find it, and the good-natured clerk of the court, for a small fee, will allow you to sit in his large, musty office on Grant's Hill, and look over the record to your heart's content. We have simply "varnished" the tale, in accordance with the privilege of authorship, but we have not obscured its truth thereby.

Well, then, it was night over the city, and the worthy (and unworthy) denizens of the place were for the most part wrapped in slumber, some perhaps dreaming of gold, others of approaching happiness; others, perhaps, of the singular trial witnessed that day at Alderman March's office, on Penn street, and the very strange conduct on the part of Tom Worth, "the poor miner," as he was generally spoken of.

That night, about eleven o'clock, a man stood at the corner of Bedford avenue and Fulton street; he had just reached the intersection of the two streets, and then stood there, looking around him in every direction, as if undecided which way to go, whether on up the avenue, or out into the street, and thence to the summit of Cliff Hill.

As he stood thus, hesitating and undecided, he suddenly heard footsteps behind him. The place was lonely and infrequent

at all times; now it was deserted and desolate. The man hastily thrust his hand in his bosom, and backed himself up against the embankment, as if to let the other pass.

The man who was coming up, evidently from the not very distant Boyd's Hill, had seen the other as he stood at the corner of the two streets; but he did not hesitate. He continued straight on, turned into Bedford avenue, and was hurrying down the steep descent, when he was suddenly halted by the motionless one. He stopped short in his walk, and with a light laugh turned back.

"Ah, my fine fellow; I was sure it was you, and walked by to try you, to see if you would know your boss!"

"I did not indeed know you, boss, until I saw that long coat; then I would have sworn 'twas you."

"Yes, the coat, ha! ha! But, my good fellow, how is it? Any suspicious characters around the nest?"

"No, boss; none."

"Glad to hear it!" exclaimed the other; "from what that infernal scoundrel, now in jail—may he rot there!—said, I feared that others perhaps might think as he did."

"I do not know what he said, boss, but I do know that that fellow followed two others from Boyd's Hill on Tuesday night—ha! ha!"

"Yes, he did; and, by heavens! that toll-keeper, Markley, saw him afterward with one of these same fellows! Good thing that evidence of Markley's; but, I have seen several men, certainly one, who resembled that jail-bird considerably, eh?"

"You're right, boss; so have I! And, perhaps—"

"Yes, you, I know what you would say, and here, my fine fellow, is a purse containing gold. 'Tis yours; and now good-night!" These words were spoken in a significant tone.

"Good-night, boss," replied the other; and without a word more of this singular, incoherent conversation, which despite the loneliness of the place, had been carried on in a half-whisper, the men separated—the one styled "boss," continuing down Bedford avenue, toward the heart of the sleeping city; the other turning abruptly off from the same avenue, and was soon lost in the shades that hung over the tall Cliff Hill.

Tom Worth sat on a low stool one long hour after his incarceration; but he was suddenly aroused by the key grating and creaking in the lock, and then the cell door was opened. One of the jailer's underlings appeared, lugubrious, dragging after him a huge bundle of bedding.

"An old man brought this for you," he said, in a kind tone, "and we allowed him to leave it. Here is a note, also, which he sent; we have examined it, and you are allowed to receive it." So saying the man spread out the bundle of coverlets and comforters, and gave the miner the blurred and blotched note.

In a moment he was gone.

Tom Worth opened the note, and his big heart throbbed. His eyes filled with tears as he read the few, rudely, written lines:

"DEAR, DEAR BOY:

I thought you might be cold to-night, my poor Tom, and so I have sent you your coat. I will also say, my dear boy, that I am awful lonesome without you, and that I have cried like a calf, about you, Tom; and, Tom, I will pray to God for your safety.

"Your friend till death,

B. W.

The hours sped on; and still Tom Worth thought not of lying down. Eleven o'clock, and then twelve o'clock struck, and the prisoner arose.

Suddenly, far above him at a little height in the cell, looking into the jail-yard, he heard a cautious "hast!" He glanced up, but could see nothing. Then he heard a low voice, but he drank in every word:

"I followed you, Tom, and I know where they have put you. Speak, my boy! I have twenty stout fellows in jail, who'll tear these bars out for you! Speak the word, and say you're NOT guilty, Tom! Time flies!"

"No, no, Ben! Go home and pray for me, but no violence, if you love me," was the cautious reply.

"Then good-by, Tom," came in tremulous tones, after a moment's pause, from the speaker above. "I'll do as you say."

"Good-by and God bless you, Ben!"

All was silent again; no more whispers came, and Tom Worth was once more alone.

CHAPTER XV.

A FRIEND THAT STICKS.

As warped and misdirected as were Mr. Harley's notions of right and wrong, in this particular instance, yet our readers must not forget that he was a father, with only one link to bind him to the memory of her who now sleeps the lasting sleep, beneath a costly mausoleum in Hildale Cemetery.

He was a fond and doting parent; and the one short week which had elapsed since the sudden disappearance of his daughter, had wrought a marvelous change in the old man. His pomposity of manner had left him; the quick flashing of his imperious eye was now subdued and faint. His haughty stride was now an old man's tottering, feeble step; his every gesture a palpable sign of weakness, a lack of moral and physical nerve.

The ruddy flush of health had passed away from his round, pale cheek, leaving a

hollow and a deathlike pallor there. Doctor Breeze, who more than once, in his own frank, cordial manner, had called to see how matters were, and if any tidings had been heard of the missing maiden, noted the altered appearance of his friend, and had covertly stole his finger over the irregular, jerking pulse, throbbing so heavily under the hot surface of the feverish wrist. And then the old physician had hinted that he had better take care of himself.

The fact is, old Mr. Harley had been thinking a good deal—had been thinking of the unfinished sentence—the incomplete words of Tom Worth, the miner—of the noble, honest look of that poor man. And then gradually he had thought to himself that it was hard to believe Tom Worth guilty of the dark crime, though he had been so quick to believe it. But Fairleigh Somerville had said

hours pass lonesomely in my cabin at night without you; and now! ah! how sorrowful the wind moans over the mountain, to me, all alone! But, good-by, Tom; good-by and may God bless you!"

Then the old miner was gone.

CHAPTER XVI.

A NIGHT COMPACT AND A WIND-WAIF.

NIGHT once more had fallen upon Pittsburgh. The lamps were lit in the smoky streets, and the bell from the neighboring spire had struck nine o'clock. The thoroughfares and avenues wore a deserted look. There were but few persons yet stirring abroad, for the air was chilly and wet, and grates, furnaces and fire-places made it more pleasant to court the comforts of indoors. Despite the chilliness of the night, however, there were *walkers* abroad, and those who, muffled up and thoroughly concealed, prowled about.

Such were two men.

They had just left the dingy *purlieus* of the Shinley Property in Alleghany City, and entered Cedar avenue. They continued their way rapidly on, and at last emerged from the nest of great iron houses huddled by the river-bank, near the Fort Wayne railroad bridge.

They here glanced around them for a moment, as they stood on the silent abutment. Then, with a half-uttered exclamation of satisfaction, they turned off summarily, and were soon within the gloomy recesses of the bridge.

Fifteen minutes elapsed before they emerged from the long bridge and plunged into the dark depths of the sleeping city, on the other side of the river.

They hurried rapidly on until they reached the straight double track of the Pennsylvania railroad; turning abruptly down which they strode on for several hundred yards.

Suddenly they paused.

"Here we are, Launce," said one of the men, glancing up at the steep face of the cliff to his right.

The speaker was entirely enveloped in a long cloak, reaching almost to his feet.

"Tis a rough climb, and we must do it, for it cuts off a long tramp. Come, let's go at it!"

The wind had indeed risen, and was howling in gusts along the deep cut of the narrow street, and over the high hill on which they stood.

The man who last spoke—the "boss"—rose to his feet, buttoned his overcoat closer around his chin, and drew the heavy woolen scarf high up about his neck.

The other answered not for several moments; he had seated himself again by the roadside, on the rude stone, and his head was bent upon his breast. But, at length, without looking up, he said:

"'Tis all right, boss, and I will obey; but, boss, you promised me a little *extra pay* for carrying victuals for a certain person, to the old house, you know, sir. I would not tell you of it, sir, but every little thing counts for poor Mary and the children, you know."

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 15.)

The Ace of Spades:

OR,

IOLA, THE STREET SWEETER.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A DESPERATE DEED.

Iola waited until after Bill brought in her meager supper and a lighted candle, before she recommenced her attempt to escape from her prison.

Bill locked the door behind him as usual. Iola made but a light supper. She could not eat. All her thoughts, all her wishes were concentrated on one object, and that object was to free herself from the power of her brutal tyrant, whom she hated now ten times more bitterly than she had ever done before.

Iola waited until she heard a distant bell ring out nine o'clock on the night-air.

"Now I shall not be disturbed," she said, as with the blade of the knife for a weapon she made an attack upon the wall of the closet.

And at the very moment that the girl was, with blistered hands, piercing the closet wall, the "Marquis," her protector—not five hundred yards from her—was engaged in a hand-to-hand encounter with English Bill.

At the end of an hour Iola had removed all the plaster from a place about two feet square. Nothing now remained, but the thin laths to bar her passage into the other room.

The girl had set the candle down upon the floor near her so as to give her light, and also to prevent it from throwing its rays through the holes in the shutters, and thus betray to any one outside, who might chance to look up, that she had not retired to rest.

Another hour of hard work and but two laths remained.

Iola seemed so near that the heart of the girl beat joyfully. She did not mind the pain of her bleeding hands, torn here and there by the splinters of the wood, or chafed into blisters by the knife, that, lacking a handle, was extremely difficult to use.

Yet still, cheerfully, despite the obstacles, Iola worked on. Each cut of the knife brought her so much nearer freedom; each lath that she had broke off and thrown to the floor was a barrier between her and the "Marquis" removed.

Iola did not doubt for a single instant that if she succeeded in getting into the other room, she could easily make her way into the street, and once there she was free—to go where she liked.

"Oh! to-morrow I shall feel his arms around me; to-morrow, perhaps, I shall feel his kiss upon my lips, for he will kiss me if he's half as glad to see me as I shall be to see him, and I do not doubt that!" she murmured, as she toiled without ceasing at the wall.

Then, with her slender fingers she broke off another lath—that she had saved through with the knife—and cast it down.

"One more!" she cried, in glee. "One more and, then I am free! Oh! how Bill will swear when he comes in the morning and finds that the cage is empty and the bird is gone. I will never be trapped again as I was this time!"

And so, with a heart beating high at the thoughts of that freedom that seemed so near—yet might be so far, for a hundred things might happen to defeat her plans—Iola cut into the last remaining lath.

The little hands were sore, indeed, but the girl heeded not the pain.

The lath broke in her grip, she casts it to the floor beside the others.

"At last!" she cried, in triumph.

The way of escape was open; already in imagination she was in the glad embrace of the man she loved so well.

Iola rose to her feet. Her limbs ached. She had been so long upon her knees in incessant toil that at first she could hardly stand.

Just as the girl was about to crawl through the hole that she had made in the wall, the key in the lock of the door turned suddenly, the door opened and Bill entered.

The rough was in his stocking feet; he had drawn off his boots and crept upstairs softly, as though with a purpose to surprise the girl.

Iola uttered a slight scream as her eyes fell upon the figure of the rough. The attempted escape was discovered. The truth could not be disguised; yet in the scream of the girl there was more of anger than alarm.

"So, my beauty, you were a-goin' away without even havin' the perilness for to come an' say 'good-by' to your affectionate friends," said Bill, with mock respect. Iola saw at once that the rough had been drinking heavily. His inflamed eyes and flushed

face would have told her so, if his manner had not.

"Goin' to git up an' dust, were you; my lady-bird? Wasn't it lucky that I'd thought I'd come up an' see after your health? I think so much of you, my dear; you know I do, don't you?" and the rough laughed a drunken, brutal laugh.

Iola felt that she was becoming desperate. To be detected at the very moment that the way of escape lay open before her was bitter indeed.

"Why don't you answer me when I speak to you, you she-devil, you? Goin' to run away ag'in, was you? Where was you a-goin' to, hey?" demanded the drunken ruffian, swaying unsteadily in the doorway.

"Anywhere out of your reach!" cried Iola, desperately.

"Well, that's nice conduct for a doubtful darter, I must say," cried Bill, indignantly.

"And a nice father you are!" returned the girl, in scorn, her eyes flashing fire and her white teeth clenched convulsively together.

"Don't you talk back to me, you young whelp!" exclaimed Bill, in a rage. "I know where you are a-goin'! You want to go to that 'Marquis,' but you won't go to him not no more. I've fixed him!"

"What do you mean?" asked Iola.

"Why, I just wrote him a letter, wot said as if he'd come to the pier foot of Forty-fifth street, that he'd hear news of a little gal that had been took away!" and Bill laughed discordantly as he told of the nice little trap that he had laid for the young man.

"And he came?"

"Yes, in course, he did, an' I were a-waitin' on the end of the pier for him. When he see'd my face, he started as if he had seen a ghost, an' then I went for him, lively! The end of it was that I pitched him into the water, an' I don't doubt that the fishes are a-feedin' on the flesh of your lover now!" Bill had not held quite to the truth in his narrative of his encounter with the "Marquis," as the reader has probably observed. He omitted all account of how that gentleman had pitched him to the earth as if he had been a sack of wheat.

Bill's story made but little impression upon Iola. She did not believe on single word that he had said. As to the "Marquis" suffering injury at the hands of Bill in a fair encounter, she utterly repudiated the idea.

"You don't seem to care much 'bout his death?" said Bill, in astonishment. He had expected that the girl would give way to a flood of tears.

"I don't believe what you say," replied Iola, in scorn.

"You don't believe me!" cried Bill, in wonder, not unmixed with rage.

"No, I do not!" reaffirmed the girl.

"Well, it's the truth!" cried Bill.

Iola looked at him with scorn fully expressed in her large eyes, but made no reply.

"What did you make that hole for?" demanded Bill, although he hadn't much doubt as to the girl's purpose.

"To escape from this prison that you have put me in!" replied Iola, undauntedly.

"The devil you did!" exclaimed Bill, astonished and angered at the boldness of the reply.

"Yes, and sooner or later I will escape from you!" cried the girl, drawing up her slender figure to its utmost height, while fierce determination shone in the flashing eyes.

"Do you want me to murder you?" cried Bill, savagely, advancing a little way into the room.

"I don't doubt that you want to do it, you utter coward!" cried the girl, hotly, retreating to the table as she spoke.

"If I lift my arm to you now, you won't have any lover to interfere, curse him!" cried Bill.

"No, if he were here—whom you call my lover, but whom I only know as the kind-hearted gentleman who dared to protect me, the poor girl—you would not dare to threaten me!" exclaimed Iola, not at all frightened by the threatening manner of the rough.

"He'll never protect you, not no more!" cried Bill, fiercely, and with the utmost contempt for the rules of Lindley Murray.

"He's gone where the dogs won't find him, an' I put him there!"

Then, with her slender fingers she broke off another lath—that she had saved through with the knife—and cast it down.

"One more!" she cried, in glee. "One more and, then I am free! Oh! how Bill will swear when he comes in the morning and finds that the cage is empty and the bird is gone. I will never be trapped again as I was this time!"

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"I will not!" cried Iola, desperately.

"I'll make you!" cried Bill; and, regardless of her threatening attitude, he rushed toward her.

Iola was as good as her word, for, as Bill advanced, she hurled the heavy pitcher with all her force at his head. Bill attempted to dodge, but the attempt was made too late. The heavy pitcher, flying through the air with no slight force, struck him full in the temple and sprawled him over on his back, stunned and bleeding; the pitcher breaking into pieces at the force of the blow.

With a scream of joy, Iola seized her hat and cloak, leaped over the body of the prostrate man, ran down the stairs, through

the entry and into the street.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE MARQUIS' PATENT OF NOBILITY.

CATTERTON, on his homeward way, reached Union square just as the clocks were striking twelve.

The young man was perplexed; the more he thought of the strange knowledge evidently possessed by the man who had written Tremaine the note, the more he was mystified.

"How could any one else guess the secret that I alone know, or, at least, that I thought was in my possession alone?" exclaimed the "Marquis," who could guess no solution to the riddle.

Catterton crossed Union square and continued on down Broadway.

As the "Marquis" passed Astor place a girl in a light dress and dark cloak turned into Broadway just ahead of him.

The girl hurried on as if afraid of being pursued. The figure was strangely familiar to Catterton. He resolved to see who it was and quickened his steps. He gained rapidly upon the girl. She, hearing the noise of his footstep, turned her head in alarm to discover who it was that was behind her. And to the joy of the young man he saw the face of the abducted girl.

"Iola!" he cried.

"Daniel!" she exclaimed, in joy, and, without reflecting that she was in the public street, and that—though the hour was late—there might be many passing by to wonder at her action, she threw herself with a fresh-sob, upon his breast.

For a moment the "Marquis" was as thoughtless as the girl, for he strained the little figure to his breast with an earnestness that told plainly how great was his joy at meeting her. Then releasing her, he drew her arm within his own and they proceeded on down Broadway.

"Briefly, Iola told the story of her escape from the power of the ruffian, English Bill.

After getting into the street—which she reached without molestation—she ran forward, turning to the right, without any thought, except the one of getting away from the neighborhood of the house that had served for her prison as soon as possible.

Luckily she had turned in the right direction and soon reached Second avenue. Inquiring the way from a passer-by, she ran on down the avenue; then went through Thirtieth street to Third avenue, and down Third avenue until she reached the Cooper Institute. Then she went through Astor place to Broadway; and so had chance to meet with the young man.

"But where are you going?" asked Catterton, after she had finished.

"Where could I go but to you?" asked Iola, innocently. "You are the only friend that I have in the world. The moment that I gained my freedom I remembered that you had told me about your room on Broadway. I remembered the number, too, and so I was coming to you as fast as I could."

The heart of the "Marquis" gave a great leap for joy at the words of the girl.

"How lucky it was that I met you," she continued, as they walked on, arm in arm. "Heaven seems to have directed my steps to-night."

"Yes," replied Catterton, "and now that I have

and then with a sudden impulse threw her arms around his neck and held up her lips to his; and as Catterton gazed in the young face so full of love—as he lightly touched the full, red lips and felt their dewy fragrance upon his own, he became conscious that he loved the girl whose slender figure he held within his arms.

"Good-night!" again he said, and again he touched the lips that so willingly received his kiss. "Oh, Iola!" he cried, impulsively. "I believe I love you!"

"And I know that I love you!" replied the girl, with the charming frankness of innocence. "I have loved you ever since the night when I first met you on Broadway, and I shall love you always."

And thus the lovers parted.

That night the "Marquis" dreamed only of the blue-eyed girl that at last he was conscious that he loved, and Iola's visions were of rest, of peace, and eternal love, as the wife of Daniel Catterton.

Morning came, and about eight o'clock, Catterton, with a breakfast of dainty viands on a waiter, procured from a neighboring eating-house, knocked at the door of the cosy apartment that held the girl he loved.

Upon entering, he found that Iola had been busily engaged in examining his little library.

Bright and cheerful looked the girl. A single night had banished all traces of her imprisonment from her face.

Iola did justice to the breakfast, while the "Marquis" sat and wondered at the prettiness of the girl he had won.

At Catterton's request, Iola gave a full account of her abduction by English Bill, and of her adventures in the old rookery in Fortieth street; not forgetting to relate in full the conversation between Bill and the stranger, in the front room, that she had overheard through the hole in the wall. She also told Catterton what a strange bearing that conversation had on her life, and the knowledge the conversation she had overheard had given her.

Catterton was almost speechless with astonishment. The revelation of the mystery that had astonished him, coming from this unexpected source, excited his wonder. He had never even dreamed that the girl that he had befriended, simply from motives of humanity, had any connection with his past life, or held in her hands the key to the riddle that had puzzled him.

"Can this be true?" he exclaimed in wonder.

"Yes, all true," replied the girl.

Then Catterton told Iola the history of the child marked with the Ace of Spades, and how the lightning had imprinted the mark upon the shoulder. He also told her of his connection with the affair, and how the wealthy Fifth-avenue gentleman, Loyal Tremaino, was interested in it.

The "Marquis" now fully understood how the stranger, who had written the note that had agitated Tremaino so greatly, had gained his knowledge, for he was evidently the same person that had held the interview with English Bill; the particulars of which Iola had just related to him.

The mystery that had so puzzled the young man was a mystery no longer.

"This is the strangest combination of circumstances that I have ever heard of," exclaimed the "Marquis," in wonder.

"But it ends in happiness," said Iola, a bright smile illuminating her features.

"Alas!" replied Catterton, with a sigh; "I fear that it will end unhappily for me."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Iola, in astonishment.

"Iola, I told you last night, that I loved you," said the "Marquis," slowly.

"Yes, and I told you that I loved you," replied Iola, quickly and frankly.

"That is what makes me unhappy," replied Catterton.

Iola opened her eyes wide in astonishment.

"I can not understand you!" she exclaimed; "are you unhappy because you love me and I return that love?"

"Yes," replied the "Marquis," sadly.

"But why should that make you unhappy?" questioned Iola.

"Because I fear that our love is hopeless, and that our union is impossible."

"Who will prevent it, if you and I be willing?" asked Iola, in astonishment.

"The one that has the right to do so," replied Catterton.

"You mean my father?" said Iola.

"Yes."

"He will not keep me from wedding you; that is—if you will have me," and Iola looked shyly and cunningly into the face of her lover.

"You know that there can not be a doubt about that, Iola," replied Catterton. "I have loved you for some time, although I was really not conscious that I did love you until I held you in my arms last night. It will be the proudest day of my life when I stand with you before the altar and have the right to call you mine forever."

"And if I live, you shall have that right!" cried Iola, quickly. "You are the only friend that I have ever had in the world. Your lips are the only ones that have ever spoken kind words to me; do you think that I could ever forget that, though I should live to be a thousand years old?"

"Iola," time in this world changes many things," replied the "Marquis," and he spoke the truth.

"Time will not change me," replied the girl, decidedly.

"You think so now, Iola, but you are young; as you grow older, you will change."

"Never in my love for you!" said the girl, earnestly.

"Iola, you say that I am the only one that has ever treated you kindly."

"Yes," quickly cried the girl, interrupting him, "you are the only one!"

"Perhaps, then, this feeling in your heart which you think is love, is merely gratitude. In time, you may see some one else. You will then discover the truth, and just think how bitter it will be for me—who truly love you—to know then that you have discovered the truth." Catterton spoke earnestly, and his tone was clear evidence that he was deeply interested.

"Iola," he continued, "I will not hold you to the avowal that you made last night. I will give you your pledge of love back and forget your words. If in the future, I will find that you do love me, then I shall only be too glad to accept and treasure your love."

For a moment Iola did not reply. The convulsive quivering of the lips, the flushed, grieved face, and the large tears that welled slowly into the loving blue eyes, proved how deeply the girl was affected.

"You do not love me at all!" at last she said, slowly, and with a great effort forcing the tears back.

"Why do you say that?" asked Catterton,

while he looked with sorrow upon the mournful face of the girl.

"Because if you did love me, you would not speak this way—you would not wish to drive me from you!" replied Iola, and her face plainly expressed her heartfelt grief.

"Iola, I do not wish to take advantage of your fresh young heart. I wish you to know fully what you are doing when you say, 'you love me,' and consent to become my wife." Iola, some people call me the "Marquis"; I am proud of the title. Do you know why I am proud of it, and why I am called so?"

"No," answered Iola.

"Because they say that I never deserted a friend or treacherously injured an enemy—that my word was my bond and that I kept that word, even at the risk of life. This is my patent of nobility. If I should accept this love, that you would so freely give me, without warning—without giving you time to think of what you are doing, I should disgrace my marquis-ship and lose all right to the title."

With every word that the young man uttered, Iola's love increased.

"You are so good!" she murmured.

"Iola, I love you better than I do myself—and self-love you know is strong—but not even that love shall prompt me to do you wrong."

"But if after this explanation—if I am sure that I love you—that I will never love any one else—you will not reject that love?" said Iola, imploringly, rising as she spoke, and extending her hands in supplication toward her lover.

"No, if after I have spoken so plainly, you say you love me, I shall believe you!"

With a cry of joy Iola sprung into his arms.

"Oh, I do love you, so much!" she murmured, as she hid her flushed face on his breast.

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you shall have her. We heard your conversation with the lady, and now Lulie learns—too late, she feared that her life happiness was forever wrecked. But I love her too well to stand between you. Hard as the task is to give her, it would be worse to claim her when she loves you so. Take her, Dr. Grace."

His voice was calm and low, and he laid Lulie's hand in the young physician's; "Lulie, there is the letter intended for you. By a well-nigh fatal blunder it was placed in the wrong envelope. Read it, Lulie. I will await my answer."

Side by side the young men stood, watching her sweet face as she read; now blushing, now paling. Then she glanced at Dr. Grace; a fond, trustful look it was. Then she turned to Lynn, with her beseeching, troubled eyes.

"I don't want you to think of me, Lulie, cousin Lulie. To-night has been the happiest of my life. I will thank God for it, without fretting for more. Accept my trustiest wishes for yourselves, forever."

He caught her hand and laid it against his forehead.

"Mrs. Holcombe, your honor and mine will receive no stain from the guest who shall demand our courtesy. She will please you, you will love her. I—oh, Mrs. Holcombe, if you but dreamed of the constant darkness I walk in, you would pity me—yes, you would weep over me, as a mother for her heart-broken son."

A great racking sob burst from his white lips, and then he released her hand.

"To-day I must be away at dinner-time. To-morrow the lady will be with us; then I will explain more fully. Trust me, Mrs. Holcombe, trust me and bless me, and pray for me."

She murmured a broken benediction as he bowed his proud head before her, and then softly left him alone.

He gathered up his scattered papers, and arranged the disordered furniture.

Then he lifted the gray velvet curtain and entered his mysterious retreat.

At first no sound broke the stillness; then a stifled moan came faintly from the darkness, and his voice, laden with anguish, fell mournfully on the still noon-air.

"Our merciful Father, strengthen me, assist me in this hour of deepest trial! enable me to sacrifice all for duty, all for right! and though I relinquish her who would have been—who is—God forgive me, the light of my life, let me believe it is all for the best. When I waver in my sacrifice, oh, be merciful and sustain me! When I grope on in the darkness, be Thou my light! and when grief and sorrow shall mingle in my bitter cup, let me remember Thy hands hold it to my lips, and may I drain it even to the dregs!"

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He ceased, and for several minutes he was silent again. Then the curtain parted, and he came forth, pale but composed.

The carriage, agreeably to his orders, was at the door. He took the lines himself, and drove slowly to the Grange.

He was shown into the parlor, where, before he had seated himself, Maude entered, beautiful and bewildering, her starry eyes charged with the love-light of her full heart.

"You returned safely, then, yesterday afternoon?"

He knew he must say something, yet he dreaded to speak the most commonplace remark.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Trevlyn; and you, since then, have been well, and—" she hesitated, blushed, then added—"happy?"

A spasm of pain crossed his fine face, but he met the occasion she offered of striking his own death-blow to hopes and joys.

"Maude," he said, in a hollow tone that startled himself, while she started in surprise at the sound, while an undefinable fear curdled her blood and drove the carnation from her cheeks.

He gazed upon her sweet face, while his eyes dimmed with manly tears as he thought of the revelation that hour would make. He felt that he could die to save her the pangs he must cause, and yet his own rashness had placed him on the ground they now occupied.

On a fresh sheet he transcribed a line, signed his name, and thrust the sheet into the envelope, hastily and wildly, as if he feared he would repent.

He called William and directed him to post the letter immediately.

That dispatched, he rung for Mrs. Holcombe.

"Are the rooms in readiness, the western suite?"

"Everything is in perfect order, sir, and I think you'll be pleased with my arrangement. Will you step up-stairs and see the rooms?"

"No—no," he replied, hesitatingly; "I think there is no occasion for that. But, I wish to ask a favor of you. If company comes to the Archery—a lady—will you exert yourself to the utmost to make her happy and contented?"

Mrs. Holcombe answered by a glance, half-agrieved, half-wondering.

"I know you always do make every thing pleasant for those around you, and I only ventured to mention this to you, because if any one comes, her position will be a very peculiar one."

"Mr. Trevlyn, if it is your wife you are going to marry and bring home, no woman should be happier, and no one will serve her more faithfully than I."

He brushed the great drops of perspiration from his forehead, and paused for her

A tear gathered under her spectacles, but she forgot to brush it away, in her amazement at Frederic's conduct.

While she was speaking, a vivid blush had arisen to his cheeks, and he seemed ill at ease. A sudden idea inspired Mrs. Holcombe.

"My dear Mr. Trevlyn, I am old enough to be your mother, therefore I hope you will take what I say as an act of kindness. Were you my son, I would do just what I am doing now, and ask just what I am going to ask now."

She came up closely to him, and laid her hand lovingly on his head.

"My boy, is it a wife, a good, true wife you are going to bring?"

A groan burst from his pale lips as she ceased.

"Because, my dear Mr. Frederic, if you are going to dishonor yourself, your home, your servant, I can not remain here to witness it."

He caught her hand and laid it against his forehead.

"Mrs. Holcombe, your honor and mine will receive no stain from the guest who shall demand our courtesy. She will please you, you will love her. I—oh, Mrs. Holcombe, if you but dreamed of the constant darkness I walk in, you would pity me—yes, you would weep over me, as a mother for her heart-broken son."

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to speak. But she sat calm and silent, looking him full in the face.

"Don't look so, Maude; don't regard me so sternly. When you understand it all you will pity me, not hate me."

But she did not remove her eyes, for she could not, but a softer, tenderer expression crept into their dark depths.

"Frederic, what do you mean—are you afraid I regret your confession?"

"No, no," he returned, mildly. "Would that you did; but oh, Maude, when I spoke those words I must have been beside myself. I had no right to speak them, I ought to have been stricken dumb before my lips framed them. But the temptation overwhelmed me, and I did what I to-day suffer for—what you will suffer for. But you will forgive me, won't you?"

His pleading, passionate eyes looked eagerly in hers.

"My boy, is it a wife, a good, true wife you are going to bring?"

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eye but my own ever invaded its sanctity; but you shall enter. You have even a better right than I."

Tremblingly she suffered herself to be drawn along; he raised the gray cloud of drapery, and the two stood within the secret room.

It was a small apartment, and the wall was hung with black velvet, studded with golden stars.

But two objects occupied the room.

In one corner stood an ebony table, where lay an open Bible, and beside it a silver candlestick, in which flamed faintly a waxen taper. In the center, on a low marble table, lay a tiny white coffin, simple and unpretending. With a bound, Clare sprung from Frederic's arm, and knelt beside the casket, her hot tears flowing fast and copious.

It was a baby that lay there, white and beautiful as a sleeping angel. The tiny hands were folded on the little breast, and a little bare leg, plump and marble-hard and pure, was visible.

The face was a perfect repetition of its father, save that a happy repose marked the features, where stern *hauteur* stamped the parent.

The thin dark hair curled carelessly over the fine head, and the long dark lashes shaded the white cheek.

Clare's sobs ceased; then she arose and looked long and eagerly on the infant's placid sleep.

"My baby—my Effie—darling!"

"Our child, Clare, is happier than either of us. When she died, two years ago, I had her tiny body embalmed, and enshrined very near me, for I felt the powerful tide of fate that was sweeping on to me. A good God has blessed the memory of our daughter to me, and to-day I can lay my hand on her sinless brow and confess all I have done."

With one arm thrown around Clare's waist, who wept silently while he spoke, and the other on their baby's white forehead, he told her all.

Not a word, not a syllable did he conceal, and when he had finished, he bent over his heart-broken wife.

"Clare, can you forgive me?"

"A thousand times, yes. Only give me a little of the olden time love, only remember sometimes I am Effie's mother, and I will try to bear it; but, Frederic, my lost husband, it will break my heart, I know."

"We will help each other on our life's journey, and in heaven, where there is no marriage or giving in marriage, we will reap the reward of our sacrifice."

He led her away, and then locked their treasure in again.

(To be continued—Continued in No. 13.)

Cruiser Crusoe!

OR,
LIFE ON A TROPIC ISLE.

BY LAFAYETTE LAFOREST.

NUMBER TWENTY.

The spot which in my mind's eye had been selected for the purpose of trying my hand at boat-building, was three miles from the sea, but close to a stream that ran to the shore, and was navigable all the way. There I had observed some trees, which were likely to suit my purpose. My recollections of the misfortunes of my great predecessor prevented me from making a similar mistake. There were much better trees, and much better suited to my purpose, on other parts of the island, but then, they were far away from water.

The spot chosen by me was a small glade, close to a narrow bayou that ran into the river. Beside this was just such a tree as I wanted, though not long enough; but it was wide and straight. My first task, after fixing my camp, was to dig round the roots at which I then began to cut with the energy of one whose life is at stake. This took me a whole day, and then the tree did not fall; but at early dawn again my ax awoke the echoes of the forest, and about midday it fell.

The trunk part, which would have been of use to me, was about fourteen feet long; and, though my boat would have to be much larger, yet still, I did not despair. My brains were at work, both remembering and inventing. The trunk once on the ground, the whole of the superfluous branches and wood had to be hacked off with my ax. Then the want of a good saw became visible. But, to cut a very long and wearisome story short, at the end of a week I had before me a solid trunk nearly fifteen feet long, by four wide, and as many deep, on which to commence my arduous proceedings.

The labor was fearful, but I never flinched. My meals were hurried over as much as possible. There stood the log, and I could neither eat, drink nor sleep in peace until it was turned into a canoe. The hardest part of all proved to be flattening the upper side. This took me four days' hard consecutive work, taking off my coat, too, in earnest.

Then I began to make way. A good fire was lit at some little distance, from which I every now and then took the live coals, and so placed them on the wood of my future canoe, as to burn away the interior, while I fashioned the outside. In this way nearly all savage dug-outs are made. For several days, while I was cutting away with extreme care and nicely, the asperities and superabundant wood, the fire process

continued until the trunk was hollowed out in a satisfactory way. But this was only in the rough, as my ax had again to come into play, to make the rude thing level. Then by the assistance of my horse and zebra, the trunk was turned half over and supported by two thick branches, while I fashioned something of a keel.

This done, my boat being quite watertight, though the ends were somewhat slight, my resolution was to put it on a gridiron. This is a thing used in dock-yards to clean the bottoms of vessels. My way of making it was thus:—a number of poles and bamboos were cut and laid across the bayou or creek, just about four inches above the water, and on to this the boat was dragged by my cattle, while I guided the progress of my precious treasure with a kind of rude handspike.

My object in placing it in position was to lengthen it, both at the bow and at the stern. For this purpose, the thick bark of similar trees was cut off in one solid mass, and by judicious management and coaxing, made to assume the required shape. It was then fastened to the trunk by means of bamboo dowel-pins, or wooden nails, which were let in by means of a red-hot ramrod being used for an auger. Across the bow was placed a small deck of bamboo, to consolidate the structure, other bamboos and bamboo cords being bent round outside.

The powerful stretchers were placed above the hole, in which the mast was to be slipped; these also were secured by strong bamboo dowel-pins. A seat in the stern-sheet, and a small plank to place my feet on, and my boat was complete.

No! the masterpiece of my cunning was yet to be developed. The presence of a large quantity of india-rubber vines had been one object of my selecting this spot. My gourds were now prepared, and the proper incision being made, a good supply of the white milky juice was procured, with which, by the exercise of great patience, every seam, every joint, every doweling, was duly paid and caulked.

My triumph was complete. I had a boat.

But now came the launch. With a view to the proper and due observance of the ceremony, I placed on board my craft some large pieces of meat cut from a deer I had killed that morning, some corn, and a gourd of brandy and water. Then a loaded gun was put in the stern-sheets, and I cleared for action. With my ax the center supports were cut away, leaving only one at each end. Then the weight of the boat brought the keel to the water's edge, after which I cut away the stern-end, and the canoe was in the water on a level keel. Frantic with joy, I cast the food to my dogs, zebra, and horse, drank a good draught of brandy and water, and leaped into the canoe.

I was afloat! A child with its first toy, a young mother dandling her first child, a lawyer with a long-expedited brief, are usually quoted as instances of perfect happiness; but who so happy and proud as I?

Here on this desert island, with but a few old tools saved from the wreck of a ship, with but scanty knowledge of the way to proceed—thence heaven, that my youth had been spent in reading—I had succeeded in building myself, without the remotest assistance, a canoe, able to bear at least six or seven people, and it appeared to me that with the cargo which one man could take with him, this admitted of my sailing round the world.

In the early days of voyage and discovery, men had traveled wondrous distances in small, rickety and frail open boats, and had thus arrived in safety at their destination. Thus had the six hundred islands of the Pacific been peopled, that island world embosomed in a vast ocean, sweeping in latitude from pole to pole, rolling in longitude over a whole hemisphere, and exceeding in area all the continents and islands of the globe, by ten millions of miles.

Many years before any record that we have, these islands rose from the deep, and were peopled by stray Malay and other boats being carried thousands of miles out of their course. Chinese junks were known to land there human freight after being tossed a whole year on the angry billows;

and then, too, I was well aware that Columbus himself had made his voyage to America in a caravel not much bigger than a barge.

How proud then I was of this my vehicle for locomotion may be imagined.

Now, however, came the reflection, that my boat had to be got down to the sea, which, without oars or rudder, was no easy matter. My animals, too, had to be taken back to the place whence they came, so that they might provide themselves with food during my absence, which might—who knows what may or what may not have happened when he starts upon a journey?—be eternal.

The precious canoe was then docked in the bayou; after which, mounting my zebra, and leading my horse, which was more obedient to the yoke, and therefore employed as a beast of burden, I started for home, followed by my animals. The journey was delightful, but was not completed in one day, as I wished to select the proper place at the mouth of the river for fitting out my vessel finally.

The mouth of the river was wide, with a shallow bar, over which at times the waves dashed furiously. These bars are occasioned by the action of the wind

against the natural course of the river, causing the sediment to be deposited at their entrances instead of being carried out into the deeper parts of the sea. When the wind blows strongly—and it generally blows in one direction—the water, struggling to ooze forth, causes a terrible wave, which is by sailors technically called a "bore."

It was necessary for me to fit out my boat, provision it, and then to select a calm day for my departure. But even with a stiff breeze, the sea here was scarcely ruffled. The spot was not one I should have selected as a residence, but it did very well for a port. Broad mudbanks extended on either side when the tide was low, while birds and reptiles covered its banks. There were alligators, too. Indeed, the number of these loathsome brutes was very great, either swimming, or lying sprawling on the mud in wait for their prey.

My camp was on a rising knoll, whence I looked out upon the distant and promised land, which loomed gray and indistinct in the distance. Here my poles were erected, and a bush hut hastily constructed for the night. Here I sat after supper, gazing out at the scene before me, on the soft, unruled sea, on the wild and furious bore, on the flat sea-coast, on the distant hills; until slowly the setting sun tinged their peaks with rosy and purple tints, when they gradually sunk into darkness as the evening mists gathered strength on the seaward edge of the jungle-like prairie; and, moved by the evening breeze, sailed along like huge phantoms. Then came night itself, with its dew-laden atmosphere—against which I had guarded by means of my hut—and soon a starlit sky.

She behaved beautifully. But before I give any account of the Stormy Petrel, as my canoe was christened, let me make one remark.

I left a roaring fire on the beach, close to a large tree, which was thickly overgrown by creeping plants and Spanish moss, that hung down in graceful festoons to within a few feet of the fire.

could be at so short a distance from the equator. I found, however, that the night-dew struck a chill to my very bones, so that when I crawled on shore, to illuminate the scene, my limbs were quite stiff.

A roaring fire I made of many a huge bough and many a branch, with chips that had been left, and Spanish moss, soon relieved me, and I returned to my couch, drawing it close in shore with something of a feeling of satisfaction. But sleep not being so easily woosed as I could wish, I was again on foot, and partaking of a hearty breakfast; after which I hastened to make up my fire cheerily, and then proceeded to cut down the pole which was to serve me to guide my boat down the river.

A long and straight one being found, it was cut down, its branches lopped, and the whole ready for use in little more than an hour. Then my canoe was entered, and one thrust of the pole sent it gliding gracefully and swiftly into the clear open water.

Above the dock where she had lain was an open lake-like space, where it took my fancy to give her a trial, for which purpose the pole was rigged up for a mast, and my lion-skin hooked on for a sail. A stout oak of a tree served for a temporary rudder or scull.

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1—Loyal Heart, the Pale-face Hunter. By Gustave Aimard.

OUR FIRST AND LAST KISS.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

A lip a saint might stumble for
From the high place where he repose,
Impassioned with a perfect grace,
And dewy with the death of roses—
Did so much hold the gift of bliss,
That as it turned in maiden seeming,
And touched on mine in willing trust,
Set all my soul forever dreaming.
Thrilling along the lines of sense
A message that will be immortal,
And thrilling, long delayed that lip,
Which is her spirit's guarded portal.
And I may never kiss again,
That one no more shall need renewal:
The first, the last, for her, for me,
It burns without the added fuel.
And oh to feel through years that pass,
In cold calamitous succession,
The memory of that kiss is more
Than amulet of rare possession.

The Red-skin's Request.

BY CAPT. CHARLES HOWARD.

"PAUL THORNTON must have been crazy when he left the city, to build such a house in this wild country," the hunters in the western wilds would mutter when they gazed upon an imposing residence on a hill surrounded by forests, inhabited by wild beasts and treacherous Indians.

White men seldom visited the mansion of their adventurous brother, though under its roof they were sumptuously entertained, and to them was told the reason why he had shut himself out from the world, as it were, and dwelt so far from the boundary of civilization.

Paul Thornton was about fifty years of age, though his snow-white locks caused him to look twenty-five years older. From boyhood until three years prior to the opening of our story he had lived in a populous eastern city, and celebrated his twenty-first birthday by marrying the only daughter of a prominent citizen and railroad king. Two children, in due time, were born, and with pride the parents saw them grow into noble manhood and womanhood.

But Morgan, whom regarded as the staff for their declining years, was doomed to whiten their heads with untimely frosts, and make their lives an almost rayless existence. He happened one day to encounter a noted gambler, who at once marked him for a victim. He placed the damning bowl of intoxication to Morgan's lips, and with devilish joy saw him drink the very dregs. From that unguarded moment the descent of the hill of ruin was not difficult, and night after night found the rich merchant's son at the gambling-table.

The gold given him by his indulgent father was swept into the pockets of unprincipled men, and one night they brought him to his home a corpse.

"He accidentally discharged his revolver," said one of the gamblers, addressing the grief-stricken father.

For a while Paul Thornton believed this explanation; but the terrible truth burst upon him and sent him reeling to the earth. His son had committed suicide in a well-known gambling-hell. This terrible blow threw him into a fever, and for weeks he raved about his darling, who, in Greenwood, occupied the suicide's grave.

When he was well again, he determined to depart from the city in which had been wrecked his brightest hopes, and pass the remainder of his days in the far wild West. His wife and daughter were as eager to go as he, and one day they took their departure. Arrived in the West, Paul Thornton purchased a spot of ground from the red-men, who seemed peacefully disposed, and upon the hill in the center of his purchase he caused a mansion to be erected.

As the months of the four seasons passed, the Thorntons learned to love their secluded life, and, visited now and then by white hunters, and quite often by Indians, many hours were spent in which they forgot the tragic death of the loved one.

Among the hunters whom curiosity led to the recluse's door was a young Ohioan named Chester White. Tall, comely, and of gentlemanly address, he became a favorite at the mansion; and so pleased did Thornton become with the young man that he invited him to make his house his home.

Perhaps the bright eyes of Celeste influenced the young hunter's choice, for he quickly promised to tarry, and contribute his mite to cheer the lives of the sorrowing Thorntons. Chester, though quite a youth, was no mean hunter, and he and Paul Thornton chased the wild animals through the woods and over the plains until wearied with the sport.

The moonlight strolls of Celeste and Chester fostered a holy love, and by and by they were betrothed.

One day Chester left the western mansion, from which he expected to be absent a week. He intended to go to Fort Laramie, there to purchase some coveted articles for his soon-to-be bride. The journey promised to be a long and perilous one, and a young Indian accompanied him in the capacity of guide.

The evening succeeding Chester's departure was very beautiful, and Celeste strolled down to the edge of the timber to gather some of the flowers, which grew spontaneously and laden the air with a delightful perfume. After gathering many of the beautiful and delicate blossoms, she strolled into the wood, when she suddenly became bewildered amid the rapidly gathering shades of night.

Deeper and deeper into the dense timber went the poor girl, until wearied she sank down at the foot of a tree, where, after committing herself to the keeping of the all-seeing eye, she fell asleep.

Yes, gentle reader, in that wild wood, the abode of the panther, the fox and the terrible wolf, poor, lost Celeste slumbered, and dreamed of being in her cosy little chamber. Alarmed at her absence, her parents were searching for her, and, after shouting her loved name, and firing his rifle to guide her footsteps to him, Paul Thornton returned to comfort his tearful, fearful wife.

As the night wore on, the moon peeped over the eastern tree-tops, and her soft light shimmering down through the leafy boughs, fell gently upon the lost child. Still she slumbered on, with gathered flowers for a pillow and the ground for a couch.

Suddenly throughout the wood resounded the heart-chilling howl of the gaunt western wolf, and it was almost immediately followed by the cry of the panther. Then the

owl and the fox joined the choir, and the forest seemed alive with wild animals.

But amid these dangers the maiden slept, while not an eye in her father's house was closed for a single moment. Presently the boughs above her bent beneath some living weight, and a huge panther looked down upon her. He lashed the branches with his tail, and displayed two rows of terrible teeth.

Moments flitted by, but still the beautiful animal remained upon the limb, looking down upon his lovely victim. He seemed in no great hurry to leap upon her, for was she not already in his power?

So deeply was the panther lost in contemplation that he did not hear the approach of moccasined feet, nor see the red hands that pointed the deadly rifle at his head. Noiselessly a savage chief had followed the animal from tree to tree, little suspecting the cause of his nocturnal prowl. A strange light beamed in the Indian's eyes when he noticed Celeste at the foot of the tree. His frame was visibly agitated, and he did not raise his rifle until he was wholly calm.

At last the panther prepared for the fatal spring. He crouched lower and lashed the branches with fearful fury. Then the red man glanced along his shining rifle-barrel, and a sharp report rang through the woods.

With an almost human cry the king of our western forests rolled from the limb. He alighted on his feet, and with another cry of pain, faced the Indian. In the dim light the chief's aim had not been true, and the shot, which tore away a portion of the animal's cheek, seemed but toadden him. With the traditional bravery of his race the savage did not shun the encounter. He acted upon the offensive, desiring to bring the conflict to a speedy termination. He drew his hunting-knife and sprung upon the panther, which met him half-way.

The infuriated beast leaped upon his antagonist, and buried his teeth in the blanket, which protected his arm. The next moment the hunting-knife disappeared beneath the spotted skin; and tearing his loose, the Indian dashed him against a tree, at the foot of which he sunk in the quiverings of death.

The report of the rifle awakened Celeste, but she did not fully comprehend her peril until she was saved.

"The panther is dead," said the Indian as he turned from his lifeless foe.

"Little did Manomah think that the daughter of the pale-face was sleeping unguarded in the great wood."

"Yes; I am lost, Manomah," said Celeste,

her parents give her to him to love till he goes to the lodge of the Great Spirit, he will be happy."

Husband and wife could not but be surprised at this unexpected declaration of love, and it was some minutes before Paul could speak. He found that his reply would fire the indignation of the chief.

"The daughter of the pale-face is his no longer, Manomah. She is the promised bride of a white hunter."

The chief's head dropped upon his broad bosom, and silence filled the room.

"Then Manomah will go," he said, at last.

"Where is the white lily?"

"She is sleeping."

"Let Manomah look upon her face before he goes."

The voice of the chief was sad.

Paul stepped across the room, opened a door that led into Celeste's chamber, and beckoned Manomah to his side.

For several minutes the chief gazed upon the beautiful sleeper, and then said, as he stepped back with one lingering look:

"Tell her when she opens her eyes, that Manomah loved her. He will never forget her, the beautiful white lily. May she be happy with her pale-face lover. Manomah will wait for her in the warm lodge of the manitou."

Sadly and slowly, with a crushed heart, the truly noble red-man turned away and left the house.

Two days later he was found on the bank of a stream, dead! In his hands was found the crushed bouquet upon which Celeste had pillow'd the night she was lost in the wood. He had taken his own life, preferring to die rather than live and see the woman he loved the bride of another.

Noble Manomah! *Requiescat in pace.*

Camp-Fire Yarns.

A Cool Hand.

"Now, lads," old Pete remarked, "don't git skeered at what's mebbe nothin' but a painter. I don't believe tar' Injuns, 'cos our fire arn't ter be seen from the outside."

"Look to yer rifles and lie down. Billy'll let us know what it ar' pretty soon."

We preserved a dead silence, and obeyed his orders, all but the Englishman.

That individual preserved his seat upon his saddle with the most perfect coolness,



who recognized the chief, for she had encountered him quite often at her father's mansion. "I strolled into the wood after flowers, got bewildered, and, completely wearied out, fell asleep where you found me."

"Manomah is glad that he saved the beautiful lily of the hill," returned the chief.

"He will conduct her to her father's wigwam, where there are no prowling panthers."

"Father will reward you, noble Manomah," cried Celeste, "and there is another who will remember your noble deed."

She thought of her lover.

The chief did not reply; but took her hand and led her from the wood.

In due time they paused at the door of the mansion, and in response to Celeste's rap, Paul Thornton opened it to clasp his daughter to his heart.

"Manomah has restored the young bird to the nest," said the Indian. "He is happy. Now he will return and skin the panther."

Before Paul could stretch forth his hand to retain his child's preserver, he was flying down the walk, and soon disappeared beyond the ledge.

Celeste's adventures brought on a fever and she was very ill.

One day a young Indian came to the home of the Thorntons, and Paul dispatched him to his people to summon Manomah to his house. He wanted to reward the chief for saving Celeste's precious life.

Obedient to his summons the Indian came, with his firm step and noble mien. The grateful parents received him in the parlor, and loaded him with thanks.

Paul proffered him his gold-mounted rifle; but Manomah haughtily refused it.

"Manomah has a rifle; he can not use two," he said.

Then Mrs. Thornton took the diamond necklace from her neck and held it out to the chief.

"Let Manomah take these shining gems, though they be a small reward for his noble action," said the wife and mother.

"Let the wife of the pale-face keep them," he said, stretching forth his hand. "Manomah has no squaw."

"If Manomah will not have a rifle nor a string of diamonds, what will he have?" asked Paul, thinking that, perhaps, the chief coveted some particular thing.

Proudly Manomah drew himself to his full height, and, looking at Paul, spoke slowly:

"Manomah has said that he has no squaw. He has spoken truly. Long has he loved the peerless daughter of the pale-face, and if

puffing away at a cigar, as quietly as if he was in Bond street.

"Git down, Sir John!" whispered the old hunter. "Git down ahind yer saddle, man. If 'tar' Injuns you'll make a pretty mark for 'em."

"I think not," answered Sir John, laconically.

"Why, what in Halifax sils the durned fool?" muttered old Pete, surprised.

"Mr.—ah—Wilkins—ah—you are uncivil," returned the Englishman, imperturbably.

"D'y'e want to git shot, man?" inquired Pete. "If you don't, stop smokin' and git down."

"But—ah—Wilkins—ah—you forget—ah—that your friend Mr. Wilson engaged with me to take me safe to Santa Fe. Now—ah—this little affair is his business not mine, and I have full—ah—confidence in his—ah—capacity to attend to such things without troubling me. I feel sleepy, Mr. Wilkins, and I think I shall make up my bed."

So saying this queer genius rose to his feet, as if nothing was the matter, and proceeded to move back his saddle to form a pillow.

Pete Wilkins looked at him in blank astonishment.

"Well, I am durned!" was all he could say.

Sir John Brown proceeded to spread out his blankets and an India-rubber poncho with perfect sang froid.

And nothing was heard of by Billy Wilson.

"Hark! what's that?" said old Pete, suddenly holding up his hand in caution.

The prairie was still as death, and the coyotes had stopped howling.

The coyote is a valuable sentinel for the lonely traveler on the prairie.

As long as he howls all is safe. When he stops, something is coming.

It may be only a wild beast, but it may also be a lurking Indian.

"Durn me if there ain't somethin' up," said the old hunter; "and what 'tar' I'm kerfumixed if I know."

"I think I know," remarked little Charley, quietly.

"You!" said Pete. "What does a youngster like you know of the plains?"

"Not much perhaps, Pete, but I've noticed something strange."

"And what ar' it?"

"Don't you begin to hear something like thunder, a long way off?"

The old hunter laid himself on the ground, and listened intently.

"Durn my karkidge if the youngster arn't right!" he suddenly exclaimed; "I know what 'tis now."

"It's the buffaloes moving—is it not?" asked Charley.

"I b'lieve you've hit it, lad, although an old mountain-man like me war puzzled."

At this moment Bill Wilson came in in some excitement.

"We'll have to saddle up durned quick, lads," said he; "git your traps up, and pack yer saddles."

"But how about *him*?" asked Pete, pointing to the sleeping baronet.

"Oh, he's got to wake up. I kin do a great deal, but I'm durned if I'm a-goin' to try and stop a drove of buffaloes."

"Who'll wake him?"

"I will." And the hunter proceeded to stir up Sir John, not too gently, with the butt of his rifle.

"Wake up, Sir John!" he cried; "we've got to git out of this ere. The fellers is almost saddled."

The sleepy Englishman rubbed his eyes.

"What's the matter, Wilson?"

"Only that about a hundred million buffaloes a-comin' right over here, and if you stay there much longer you'll be squashed flat like a pancake."

"But—ah—Mr. Wilson—you engaged—ah—"

"I never engaged to drive back a herd of buffaloes, Sir John!" returned the other, decisively. "I ain't got time ter talk, for I must saddle up."

And Wilson turned away to imitate our example.

The dull, distant sound was now becoming plain, and we hurried up our task, expecting momentarily to have it cut short.